



EACPHS

Created By:
Wayne State University
Master of Occupational Therapy Student

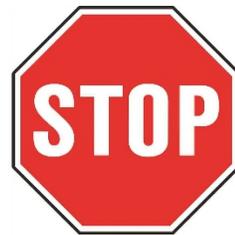
Sakina Rahman

HELPING AGING ADULTS TRANSITION FROM DRIVING



The Problem: Driving Difficulties with Age

- ❖ Driving is an activity that allows an individual to be mobile, autonomous, and connected to their loved ones and community. However, as we progress in age, driving becomes a contentious subject.
- ❖ The U.S. Department of Transportation Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) analyzed that those over the age of 70 are susceptible to automobile related injuries and more likely to be killed in a car crash than their middle-aged counterparts. In 2018, it was reported that approximately 35 million people 70 and older reside in the United States, representing about 11 percent of the population. Based on data presented by the Federal Highway Administration, there were as estimated 29 million licensed drivers 70 and older in 2018. A total of 4,973 people ages 70 and older died in crashes in 2018. Moreover, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the geriatric population is projected to grow to 53 million by the year 2030.
- ❖ Research consistently shows that driving becomes dangerous for senior citizens. As one ages, they become frail and their health begins to deteriorate and impacts their vision, hearing, and mobility which inevitably affects their ability to drive safely on the road. Many older people are reluctant to stop driving, even though they risk themselves and their communities in danger by continuing to get behind the wheel.



Warning Signs of An Unsafe Elderly Driver

❖ How does one know when it is time to stop driving? The warning signs of an unsafe elderly driver is not always obvious. However, when they exhibit these warning signals below, it is an indicator for the elderly adult to suspend their driving. Some of these signs include:

- Frequent accidents
- Discovering new car damages
- Increase in traffic violations
- Vision problems
- Hearing problems
- No sense of direction or losing your way
- Joint problem, especially while sitting
- Slower response time
- Reluctance to drive



❖ **CAUTION!!** Be mindful of **BEHAVIOR CHANGES** such as:

- Is the driver tense?
- Do they seem worried or preoccupied?
- Are they experiencing fatigue post driving?
- Do they fasten their seat belt?
- Do they sit comfortably at the wheel, or do they crane forward or show signs of discomfort?
- Do they seem tense and preoccupied, or easily distracted?
- Are they aware of traffic lights, road signs, pedestrians, and the reactions of other motorists?
- Do they often tailgate or drift toward the oncoming lane or into other lanes?
- Do they react slowly or with confusion in unexpected situations?
- Do they consistently wait too long to respond to traffic lights or other driving cues?
- Do they tailgate?
- Do they stay in their own lane or let the car drift very close to the centerline?
- Does he or she complain of getting lost more than she used to?



Treatment Options for Seniors Who No Longer Drive

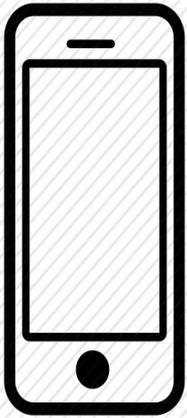
❖ Social Support

- The best method to help the aging adult transition from driving is sitting them down and addressing them promptly and carefully. Educate and inform the elderly adult about the possible consequences of driving as an older individual. Be meticulous of their emotions, as they may deprecate it due to humility and a reminder that the older driver is getting to a stage where they are unable to take care of themselves and manage the activities and tasks of their daily life.
- Giving up the keys may not always be easy. However, there are other ways to support your loved one through this transition:
 - **Listen** – Your loved one is mourning a huge loss, and by talking to them and even having them share cherished memories will allow them to come to terms with transitioning from driving.
 - **Being present** – Be there for your loved more and visit them more than usual during this transition period. Check on them regularly and encourage them to keep in contact with you and other loved ones. Help introduce a new hobby or activity to take their mind off driving.
 - **Watch for signs of depression** – The former driver may show signs of depression and if you suspect your loved one is melancholy, consult their doctor. Signs include:
 - Withdrawn from society
 - Easily agitated/irritable
 - Constantly sleepy or fatigue
 - Loss or increase of appetite



❖ Alternative Ridesharing Options

- Public Transportation
 - There are complementary paratransit services and subsidized transportation options designed specifically for the elderly and/or disabled who are unable navigate and use fixed bus routes or rail systems in their designative environments
 - **NOTE:** Accompany he/she the first time they utilize public transportation to make them feel more comfortable with it
- Carpooling with their respective: caregiver(s), family, friend(s), neighbor(s)
- Walking or jogging allows the individual to receive a breath of fresh air and the aging adult is still interacting with their environment/community
- Elderly Friendly - Mobile App Services



- SilverRide – Comprehensive service accompanying senior citizens to their outings. The drivers are trained to help the aging adults into the car and walk with them when they arrive to their destinations
- Go Go Grandparent – A service designed for seniors who do not have access to a smartphone or are not familiar with their device
- Arrive – Another service very similar to Go Go Grandparent but is only accessible to Uber and Lyft customers
- Via – Carpooling service that is popularize amongst the geriatric population. Includes cost-effective prices and provides a sense of community.
- Uber – Basic ridesharing app but does not meet ADA compliance
- Lyft – Basic ridesharing app but does not meet ADA compliance

How Will This Improve Your Quality of Life?

- ❖ The interventions mentioned above allow older adults to improve their occupational engagement by providing them with better health, having them stay active yet mobile in their community, increase their social interaction abilities, and remain independent in their activities of daily living (ADLs)
- ❖ The area of activity that is being impacted is:
 - **d475 Driving** Being in control of and moving a vehicle or the animal that draws it, travelling under one's own direction or having at one's disposal any form of transportation appropriate for age, such as a car, bicycle, boat or animal powered vehicles. *Inclusions: driving human-powered transportation, motorized vehicles, animal-powered vehicles Exclusions: moving around using equipment ([d465](#)); using transportation ([d470](#))*
- ❖ However, by having an elderly adult transition from driving, it improves
 - **d570 Looking after one's health** Ensuring physical comfort, health and physical and mental well-being

What Other Services Can Help You?

- ❖ **Occupational Therapist:** These practitioners specialize in driving rehabilitation and increase one's independence in driving by evaluating your driving, functional, and emotional skills and making certain recommendations to increase safety.
- ❖ **Primary Care Provider and/or Ophthalmologist:** The driver should ensure regularly scheduled medical and/or vision exams, especially if they have concerns about their health or vision which may hinder their driving abilities.

- ❖ **Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS):** A trained driving specialist that evaluates one's driving abilities and will provide necessary recommendations and skills

Helpful Resources

- ❖ Your local Secretary of State Office - Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
<https://www.dmvusa.com/state.php?id=23>
- ❖ The American Occupational Therapy Association has a searchable database to help you locate a certified driving rehabilitation specialists (CDRS) in your area
https://myaota.aota.org/driver_search/index.aspx?_ga=2.1399985.1430077127.1506340616-425002412.1500305282
- ❖ Driver safety class <https://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/?migration=rdrct>
- ❖ Your car insurance company may supplement further information

****REMEMBER**:** **NOT DRIVING DOES NOT EQUAL TO LOSING YOUR INDEPENDENCE** 😊

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